

**MEETING SUMMARY #4
WSF COMMUNITY MEETING
KINGSTON COMMUNITY CENTER, KINGSTON, WA
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2009 6:30 – 8:30 P.M.**

Note: This meeting summary represents notes from the Washington State Department of Transportation Ferries Division (WSF) Community Meeting, and is not a formal transcript or minutes. It is provided as a record for the staff and public in attendance, and other interested parties.

Welcome and Introductions

WSDOT Assistant Secretary David H. Moseley

David welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He introduced his WSF staff members then briefly went over the agenda and noted that there would be time for public comment at the end of the meeting.

Walt Elliot of the Kingston FAC introduced himself and the other Ferry Advisory Committee (FAC) members who were in attendance. He then explained to the audience, in reference to the reservations pre-design study, that the Legislature has directed WSF to conduct this study. WSF had no choice in the matter and will have no part in the decision to implement reservations. It will be up to the Legislature. He suggested that the best way to use the time in this meeting would be to get everyone's questions answered rather than just protesting the idea in general.

Vehicle Reservations Pre-Design Study

WSDOT Assistant Secretary David H. Moseley, WSF Operations and Project Manager Doug Schlieff, Michael Hodgins of Berk & Associates

David introduced Doug as the project manager for the study. Doug has been with WSF for more than 30 years and is a daily ferry commuter. He brings a lot of knowledge to the table. We wanted someone involved in this study that uses the ferries everyday and can ask the question: how would that work for me? Before I hand it over to Doug I want to clarify what exactly the Legislature has directed us to do. They have directed us to conduct a pre-design study of what a reservations system would look like. What would the IT / back office technology have to be to serve the needs of our customers? What business rules would need to be in place to make the system work well and be flexible? I want to be clear - the Legislature has not authorized us to implement reservations anywhere. They want to see the pre-design report to understand how reservations would work, and to make sure that it would be helpful to

customers rather than an inconvenience. This is only worth doing if it can help our customers as well as help us spread our demand better.

Doug continued the discussion by explaining some of the reasons for reservations. Most have heard about the steel electrics being pulled from service. That event combined with the fact that our entire fleet is aging has led to all of the funding being directed toward building new boats. There is no funding for terminal expansion. There are congestion issues at our terminals, and because of the financial situation that the state is in we have had to identify some strategies that will allow us to better use the space that we have without expanding any of our facilities. A reservation system may be one way to mitigate some of the demand, reduce wait times, and cut down on the amount of vehicles idling at the tollbooths. It was identified in our Long Range Plan and the Legislature directed us to take a closer look at this possibility. If we were able to take the line at the tollbooth and turn it into a list of reserved cars, we could try to push the demand out to underutilized trips. If we are able to provide our customers with certainty about the boat they will be able to get on, so they can just come down and get on the boat, we may be able to attract more users by offering that service. By doing this we are trying to avoid having to expand our existing terminals.

The Legislature wants to know how this would work, what terminal processing enhancements we would need, the costs/benefits/risks, and the IT back office needs. As we go through the pre-design study, our first goal is to not limit our users' abilities to travel. Also, the system has to be easy to use and flexible. We want to improve our ferry communities' environments and mitigate expensive terminal construction. We sent out a Request for Information to the industry to determine what types of reservation programs are available off the shelf. We received six responses that were very useful, and helped us to see some features that our customers might like. We also contacted more than a dozen ferry systems around the world that use reservations, including some in England and Istanbul, Turkey. I personally visited BC Ferries, which has a very successful reservations system. There are many similarities between our system and these other systems, but also many differences. We have benefited from learning about what has worked and not worked for these other systems.

We have also split up into work groups to pursue a variety of topics, one of which is the business rules that would need to be in place to accomplish our goals. We need these rules to be able to spread our demand better, but also to protect all of our different types of users. We needed to apply this study to a specific route, and we chose Edmonds / Kingston, which has turned out to be a great choice. It is a challenging route, which has all the different user types and also carries the

most cars in our entire system. We formed a partnership group in July made up of a variety of users from both sides of that route, and we have been meeting to discuss the proposed system. They have been very constructive, asking lots of great questions, and we appreciate the time they have put in.

Next we are expected to present the draft pre-design report to the Legislature on December 15th. We have two more partnership meetings before then and lots of work to do. It is a huge task to bring together all of what we have learned. We envision that after the document is finalized, every route will be slightly different, and the pre-design report won't cover every characteristic of every route. We don't know what the future holds, we don't know if this will be implemented on some routes and not others; it may not be a one size fits all system.

Michael discussed some of the components that are emerging from the work completed so far. Some business rules that will dictate how the system will work are key things like: how much of the boat will be available to reserve, how will one be able to make reservations, how far in advance can a reservation be made, what will the cancellation policies be, etc. BC Ferries only reserves up to 40% of their vessels, whereas we are looking to make up to 90% available to be reserved during peak times. BC Ferries has enormous terminals that can handle first come, first served traffic, then they charge a premium for the certainty that a reservation provides. We will not charge a fee, and because we have much smaller terminals we will have to reserve more of the space on our boats to help deal with the backups in our ferry communities. We want people to show up in sailing-sized packets because that's about how big most of our holding spaces are.

In terms of when a reservation can be made, we will make commute window sailings open 4 weeks in advance, and non-commute sailings 6 months in advance. We may also release some space over time, and try to move people that have flexible travel plans into those non-commute windows. We know that the 90% idea causes concern in residents who might think that they will be pushed out by other users. In order to protect commuters and ferry-dependent residents it is imperative that we have a Priority Access program for commercial users and regular users. You would sign up for an account with your credit card that would maintain a minimum balance similar to the Good-to-Go system used on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Once you hold this account you would have access to space that has been allotted for each sailing which is bigger during commute times, and you would not have to prepay for your fare. If you are not an account holder you would just call or go online to make a reservation and pay for your fare in advance.

In terms of processing cars at the terminals, we would need the holding capacity for 100-120% of the vessel, which we have at 15 of our 18 terminals. The three terminals that do not have that capacity are Fauntleroy, Edmonds, and Tahlequah. If reservations were to be implemented at these terminals, there would have to be some modifications made to the business rules, but we feel that we have solutions to the problems. For Edmonds, which we have been working on with our partnership group, we are looking at only reserving roughly 70% of the vessels because of the reduced holding space. The biggest enhancements we would make to our terminals would be the variable message signage that would let you know if the boats are on time, how much space is available if you do not have a reservation, if there is a delay at one terminal, etc. We will put signage at roadside points approaching our terminals also, at decision points like the Hood Canal Bridge so that you can choose whether to go to Kingston, Bainbridge, or Bremerton.

On the IT side, we are working with the data we received from the Request for Information, and we have found that there are systems out there capable of supporting our business rules. The system would have to work with our current ticketing system, and have multiple ways to make/change/cancel a reservation like online, on the phone, using phone apps, kiosks, email, text message, etc. Getting the word out to users if there is a sailing cancellation by using these methods, as well as the variable signage is also key. The system has to be easy to use, be customer friendly, and work with many kinds of payment methods. Our task is to figure out how it would work best with the different challenges of each route. From what we have learned about the reservation practices of other ferry systems worldwide, routes similar to the San Juans and Port Townsend / Keystone are generally 100% reserved; we know that doing that would adversely affect residents. There are really no equivalents to Edmonds / Kingston out there. We are looking at what we can do in order to balance the concerns of our customers with what would work for WSF.

The reservations idea came up two years ago when we were working on the Long-Range Plan, in response to a request from the Legislature. They wanted to see some adaptive management strategies to allow for better handling of the demand that would support growth without us having to expand our terminals and vessels. Another option was congestion pricing, which they determined would have more of a severe impact on our customers than reservations would. Even two years ago we began to hear some serious concerns from customers about reservations and a few have come up over and over. One is that if we reserve a high percentage of the boat, does that mean people won't have access when they need it. We have thought a lot about that issue, and that is why we are suggesting the Priority Access program to protect those regular customers

and have space allocated for that group. Another concern we've heard is the issue of return trip predictability. Most people know which boat they need on the way out, but maybe they have no idea when they will be coming home. We are working to make sure that changing a reservation will be easy, so that we can shift people around as their plans change. Another concern we hear a lot is that reservations will take away the ability for spontaneous travel. We have a couple different ways to deal with that. There will always be the option of traveling during low demand periods just like how it is now. We are also looking at holding a small amount of space for each sailing until the last minute, and releasing that space for those people who decide to travel spontaneously.

David ended the presentation by saying that we understand that was a lot of information to take in; what we want to hear from the audience is what you would need from the system to make it work for you. What are the things we would need to include to create the flexibility and certainty we want to provide, not problems or delays.

Clarifying Questions from Audience

1. When you're talking about message signs when you're coming across the Hood Canal Bridge, I would say you need that in Mason County. By the time you hit Poulsbo it's too late.
Yes, our idea is to have a regional signage system, where there would be signs anywhere that you have to make a choice. Highway 3, I-5, etc. This is one of the things we have learned from the other systems we researched; real-time information is vital to the customers being able to make decisions based on what is going on right then.
2. You don't really use the signs you have now. There may be information for Edmonds / Kingston, but there is no comparison to Bainbridge.
That needs to change. We need more signs and to use the ones we already have better.
3. I'm a nurse and my hospital is Swedish. I get called for emergencies and they need me there quickly; that has always worked before. What will my chances be of being able to do that with this new system?
It would depend on the time, much as it does now. If they called you today at a peak time would you be able to get on?
I've never had a problem before.
If you signed up for the Priority Access program—
Who's eligible for that?
Anyone who wants to sign up.
What about the price? I use a prepaid 20-trip ticket which is cheaper; will it be more?
That will not change.

4. It says on your website that there may be a fee.
We may ask for a minimum balance, like the Good-to-Go pass. There will be no fee to make a reservation.
5. I'm getting confused. I have my prepaid \$200 set of tickets; I've paid for that, what is the \$35 for?
If you sign up for the Priority Access program, you can use the same fare that you use today. It can link to your multi-ride card and if you're linked there would be no need for the minimum balance because you're prepaid.
6. If I decide to go to Seattle, sometimes I get on the 10:45 sailings, sometimes the 11:45. I leave assuming it will take 25 minutes to get to the ferry, but I don't always know for certain. If I have a reservation that I know I'm going to be late for, will I be calling you en route?
We will make it flexible so that you can move your reservation.
But I will have to act in order to move my reservation. I will have to phone you while I'm in traffic.
There will have to be many ways to do that. We realize that this may be a problem, that's why we are looking to save some available space on each departure. You will encounter problems on the way to the ferry, or maybe get there early, and we want to have space for when that happens.
I'm not worried about the space; I'm worried about having to act to make a change.
We don't envision that you would have to act—
It sounds like it.
If you miss your reservation, you would be in the drive-up area for the next sailing; you would not be out any money.
That's only 10% of the boat though.
That's correct. We feel that this system would discourage a lot of people from driving up without a reservation, so there wouldn't necessarily be a longer wait because there would be fewer drive-ups. Also, if the sailing you're trying to catch is generally not full now, it's likely to be nearly the same with reservations. We are just trying to spread the peak out a little.
7. I have a suggestion that during non-peak times you do less than 90%.
Maybe 40% would be better because then we would know for sure that 60% is there for drive-ups, for those boats that are usually pretty empty.
A lot are empty; I don't think you're going to see full boats where they are empty now.
Psychologically we want to know that more of the boat is available. If a tourist sees the number 90%, it's very discouraging.
That's good feedback. We are looking at that and it's likely that the initial number would be closer to 50/50.
8. It seems like more of your attention should be paid to the mechanics of the system. You have property here sitting unused, that should be used for

holding excess cars. The other day there was a truck stuck on the boat for an hour and a half; how will that affect reservations? There's only one dock in Edmonds. If a boat got stuck there it would blow reservations out the window. In Mukilteo a couple of years ago there was a snapped cable that shut down service. Don't expect people to bend over backward for this new system when you can't control the mechanics of your existing system.

There will be cancelled trips and how to handle that needs to be part of our business rules. That is something we've experienced at Port Townsend / Keystone, so we have some experience with that. We will learn ways to deal with that.

It's more common that you think. Medical emergencies cause delays; there's just no way to compensate for that.

When there is a delay we will rely on real-time information. We will get the message out so that people know when to come down.

You would be compromising the community. During the summer you have hordes of tourists coming from festivals. They should not be able to push out the commuters; we don't want to get walked on. We get walked on enough already; Kingston is like a doormat, don't beat us up anymore.

If we cannot make this work for our customers, we will not do it. If there is no benefit to the customers, the communities, and to WSF, the Legislature will not authorize it. We are not doing this to make life more difficult for you. We want more customers, and we don't want them spending hours waiting in line.

You've had busier meetings than this; there are less people now because they feel like it's futile to come.

Walt Elliot interjected to say that WSF has no say in the matter; the Legislative session starts January 11th. If you have a problem you can talk to your Legislators.

When I talk about mechanics, I'm also talking about the size of the boats. Get bigger boats.

If we had the money for bigger boats and bigger terminals, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

9. I think that the real-time information system that you have mentioned should definitely be implemented, regardless of reservations. I'm still struggling to see the benefits of a reservations system though.
10. You've talked about incentives to ride the emptier boats; what exactly is that worth to us?
If you are able to travel during non-peak times, you can reserve that space sooner.

That's not the incentive I'm looking for. How much less will it cost?
That is the issue of congestion pricing that the Legislature has already said no to.

Walt Elliot interjected to say that lowering the price for some sailings means raising the price for others, so there is a downside to a discount.

11. I may be in the minority here, but I am almost retired. When you put the information up about the congestion, will you put it at the airport? At the University? Where will I be able to get the information other than on the road? I don't want to pack my computer around with me. Will it be in downtown Seattle? If it's in lots of different places, I can decide to wait.
That's a very good suggestion. That will be a big part of our discussion; how to provide that real-time information as best we can.
12. I'm neither for nor against reservations at this point. I think WSF has done a good job identifying the problems that we will face, but not such a good job of finding answers to those problems. I've read all the minutes of all your partnership meetings, and attended one. The discussions are not about objectives. For example, there are three different rider groups: commercial, premier, and general. The first two get space set aside for them. Why? Why is their trip more important than me going to the doctor? There is no need for classes of users, those people know the system, and they don't need advantages. I want an equal chance. I've also heard talk about commercial users having advantages, but there's never more than 10% of the boat used for large trucks. You're not treating me as an equal customer. We all depend on the ferries, not just them. We need to be treated fairly if you want to see this be a success. You say Port Townsend is a success, but I was at dinner with friends there the other night and they had to leave early in order to be on the dock thirty minutes before their sailing, when there was only three cars on the dock!
Can we keep this period for questions only; there is time for public comment at the end of the meeting.
13. How would this work for commuters who use motorcycles or vanpools?
That will remain the same as it is today.
14. Would you be able to transfer your reservation to somebody else?
We are working on that issue of transferability; there will be some sort of barcode that we would provide with each reservation.
We'd have to be able to print it also, that's a problem.
15. This all sounds very expensive. Signs, IT infrastructure; does the Legislature have the money to pay for this?
We are providing them a cost analysis as part of this study.

16. In terms of implementing this system mechanically at the terminals, how will it impact the process of loading the boat? Will it be just as fast to load?
- We don't anticipate any changes there, it will happen in much the same way. There will be that option to prepay, which will move that process away from the tollbooths.*
17. The alternative section of the pre-design study, does that refer to alternatives for how to implement a reservations program?
- The alternative section presents a challenge. It may be alternate reservations systems or strategies, or alternatives like going back to the first come, first served model.*
- One suggestion I have is to outsource your ticketing as an alternate strategy.
18. This will be a very IT dependent process. My concern is the security for all of the information that you will have. Our credit card numbers, addresses, phone numbers, when we leave, when we get home. I need to have confidence that there will be the right kind of security. What's to prevent a hacker from getting our information and knowing when our homes are empty?
- We totally understand your concern. The system will be secure.*
19. I also believe everyone needs access. I commute to Everett, and the time that I come home varies. My concern is that to be in this priority access group, all you have to do is put \$35 in an account. What's to stop people from just opening that account so they can access that space you're putting aside?
- The criteria for membership in that group are still being worked on. Will it be open to everyone? That's a work in progress.*
20. If my computer is down, or I don't own a computer, how will you address that?
- We will have a sophisticated telephone system.*
21. How will this work for someone who has no cell phone, computer, or credit cards? I want to be able to travel spontaneously; I don't want to have to deal with putting \$35 in an account to be able to use the ferry. This is public transport. I hate to use this word, but this is sounding very elitist to me. You have to have money in an account, and use a credit card to get on a ferry?
- Would it be at all helpful to you to be able to get on the phone and see when you would be able to get on a boat?*
- I might want to stop and get something to eat on the way there; I don't know exactly when I'm going to be there. It just seems like another hoop to jump through. We're going to have to have an account; it's like those cards at the grocery store you have to use to get a good price on food.



It would be helpful if you could email all of your concerns to me.

22. What you can do for me now is I would like to know what my options are. I have three ways across the sound: the Tacoma Narrows, the Bainbridge ferry, and the Kingston ferry. I want to be able to call one number for all three of those options that would tell me which one would be faster, so I can make the decision and then make a reservation. This is something you could start now.

We do need a better system than we have now and we hope to be able to implement that.

23. I know how the ferries work. I might head down a little early if I know it will be busy. This new system seems designed to take care of those people on Friday and Sunday afternoons. What if I decide to drive up to what I thought was an empty ferry and it's busier than I thought. How late can someone make a reservation and pass me by while I sit in line? Would they just jump in front of me?

No, we envision that the drive-ups would be in the system and counted as part of the load.

Not if I'm before the kiosk.

This would be an enhancement that we are looking at. If you are in line then we would count you and we would avoid that.

If we are designing a system to take care of only a couple of peak times, it complicates all the rest of the time for us.

There are more peaks than just Friday and Sunday afternoons.

I'm aware of that, but I know that I may have to wait for one ferry, that's fine.

What if you didn't have to do that? What if you could find out ahead of time which boat you would be on so you wouldn't have to wait? You could spend that time doing something else; would that be an advantage for you?

I've spent my whole life saying I will catch this boat or the next one; getting a reservation is easy, it's getting out the door that's hard! I might have to change my reservation; it causes complications and extra stress.

We hear you, and we will make sure that the system is very flexible so we can reduce that layer of complication. We need to be able to show that we can do that or this will not go forward.

24. I'm fairly new here, I just moved in July. My question is have you profiled the communities to see what the population consists of? Kingston seems to have a lot of laid back retirees.

Yes, we have done that.

This community may have fewer commuters than Bainbridge.

Every route is different, and we would have specific business rules to suit each route.

25. So if I prepay for a reservation over and back and I miss the boat I was supposed to come back on, what happens to my money?
Did you call and change your reservation?
I may have tried to; do I lose my money?
If you no-show you will lose your money. If you call or email or get online and change your reservation then you would not lose your money. This is where the flexibility to make changes kicks in.
26. I've been living in Kingston a very long time. Where are you going to put the people who are reserved for the next boat? What about those who don't have reservations; the standby?
Kingston has room for 280+ cars on the dock and the largest boat we have only holds 202. The other boat on this run holds 188. There is still space on the dock for 3-4 boatloads of standby cars. If the dock fills up and we can no longer take standby vehicles then we would use the signage to direct people to Bainbridge.
27. What happened to the passenger-only ferry service?
The Legislature has directed us to get out of the passenger-only ferry business. I believe the Port of Kingston is looking at starting passenger-only ferry service to Seattle.
28. I've been a psychiatric nurse for years, and let me tell you: people won't listen and you will have the same old traffic jam. They will still come when they want to.
That hasn't been our experience at Port Townsend.
29. I'm very familiar with Port Townsend and I know that it appears to be successful, but I'm sure ridership must have decreased because we all decided not to use it! We don't want to deal with the reservations and the businesses suffer.
30. I never know which ferry I'm going to take; I have no idea! I need flexibility. If I was getting a reservation in a real world setting, I would have to mill around and make sure I could make the ferry.
We know that flexibility is important.
31. I went to go across the Port Townsend run as a standby, and five minutes before the boat left multiple motor homes pulled in and filled up the boat. It was very frustrating; it should be first come, first served.
32. I have heard that Port Townsend was a success, but when I tried to call in they basically said they wouldn't deal with me. If they said there was no reservations, that would be ok, but they wouldn't even talk to me. You need to improve the system to communicate better.
We totally agree with you.
33. If I come to Edmonds and I'm standby, where do I go? There are only two lanes.



That is the kind of terminal enhancement that would need to be involved, so that people would have no question about where to go.

34. If there is an emergency, what do we do in that case? For instance, my grandson was admitted to Harborview and I needed to get there fast. Will there be an allowance for that?

We accommodate medical emergencies, and will continue to do so.

35. That wouldn't qualify for a medical emergency the way you have it set up now.

If you can prove that it is an emergency, we make allowances for you.

Everyone could just tell them they have an emergency if they wanted to get on the boats.

36. In response to the question about security asked earlier, it is called Data at Rest and it means if you are not viewing the data it must be encrypted. If someone tries to steal it they would only see ones and zeros.

37. Kingston has some great real-time information already. I can look at the webcam and know what it looks like down here. If she goes to Bainbridge I can beat her because of my access to the real-time information.

38. This new IT infrastructure, is it going to cost as much as the ticket readers that don't work?

I don't know.

You need to know. That was a waste of fourteen million dollars.

39. I have a Blackberry, and it doesn't work in some places. There are holes in the service over here. That's something you may need to think about.

40. So the Sunday night line of cars through Kingston; with reservations there will be no line? Because reservations have forced those people into other time slots?

Because rather than coming and waiting to get on the third ferry, you would know which ferry you will be getting on and you would be able to come right before the sailing and get right on.

The standby thing won't exist anymore?

We would want to encourage reservations rather than standby.

41. Can I just ask the group – does everybody here have a computer? (Some audience members answered that they did not.) See, that's a problem.

We would also have kiosks in the terminals that would take reservations, as well as a sophisticated phone system. We recognize that it is important to provide many different ways to access the system.

42. When you say 90%, that's only 20 or so cars per ferry for all of those people who aren't in the loop. Weekenders might be able to plan ahead, but for regular users who use the ferries like a highway, it's unrealistic.

43. What if I have more than one vehicle and I don't know which one I will be coming in?

We have considered that issue. It's more about knowing the general size of your vehicle; is it a motor home versus a midsized car.

44. What if you have two of your own vehicles going at one time? You're saying we would only be able to make one reservation?

We have identified that issue also, and we are working on it.

45. I'm a tow truck driver, and I charge by the hour. If I have to sit in the standby for hour after hour charging my customer, they won't stand for it.

How do you do it now?

I go down there and get on.

Then it will be the same.

I don't get it; not if I don't have a reservation!

If there is space now there will be space then. If you are traveling at times now where you do not have to wait, then that is an off-peak sailing and it would be the same with a reservations system in place.

It's like rolling dice.

Just like it is now.

46. Will you be sending boats that aren't full?

We will not leave people on the dock if the boat is not full.

47. Commissioner Bauer, I would like to thank you and your team for coming and making yourselves available to answer questions. I know that these meetings can be difficult and I appreciate the work and preparation you have put into this. I'm hearing a lot of anxiety here. The fact is that the Legislature wants to pay for boats before expanding the terminals, so we need to look at this and see if it works as an option.

New Vessels Program / Preparing for the 2010 Legislative Session

WSDOT Assistant Secretary David H. Moseley

David discussed the construction of the new ferry at Todd Shipyard. We are currently undergoing construction of the first 64-car ferry. The project is on time and on budget; it is looking like a boat at this point rather than a bunch of pieces of steel. We have monthly meetings with Todd Shipyard which are very informative. It will be completed by the end of June next year, and then there will be testing and sea trials for 4-6 weeks. We expect the new vessel to be in service on the Port Townsend / Keystone run in August of 2010. This is our first new boat in 10-12 years and we are very pleased. We recently had a bid opening for 2 more 64-car ferries with an option for a third. The bid came in much better than the first bid, so even though there was only one bidder again, there was still a significant savings. We issued the Notice to Proceed yesterday, so Todd has 540 days from yesterday to complete the 2nd boat. They may beat that milestone by a couple of weeks because the engineering work is the same.

Then the 3rd boat is due to be complete in January of 2012; that boat will replace the Rhody on the Point Defiance / Tahlequah route.

David then discussed the upcoming 2010 Legislative session. As you know WSF was front and center during the 2009 Legislative session, with Plan B in the spotlight. We don't anticipate that same attention in the 2010 session. There are some important things they have asked to see; the reservations pre-design study is one of those. Also they want to see a new accident and incident investigation policy, fuel conservation targets, and information regarding a fuel surcharge in case gas prices spike again. Those are some issues that will be discussed; these are reports on things that the Legislature has asked us to look at, but they are not hot-button issues like the Long-Range Plan last year and the vessel and terminal issues. The JTC (Joint Transportation Committee) is doing a study on alternative funding options for transportation, because the gas tax is dropping as cars become more fuel efficient. In 2016 there is a one billion dollar gap in funding for the ferry system, and we need to fill that gap. That discussion will be occurring more in the 2011 session, but we need to be ready and at the table for those discussions. If there is a comprehensive transportation package for the Legislature to consider we need to be a part of it.

Clarifying Questions from Audience

1. Where will the 144-car boats be operated?

They will be flexible. They could work on Mukilteo / Clinton, here on this route, pretty much all the larger routes in the central Puget Sound area. They cannot do the Port Townsend / Keystone run because they can't make it into the harbor. That's why we need both sizes.

Public Comments & Questions

1. I've been riding the ferry for seven years, and I can count on one hand how many times I've been late for work due to the ferries. I appreciate it.
2. The Edmonds / Kingston run is generally on time; Seattle / Bremerton I don't have as much faith in.

There are some challenges on this run, like the ocean traffic and the railroad in Edmonds.

Conclusion

David thanked everyone for coming. Meeting was adjourned.

Written Comments Submitted (Transcribed)

- (L. Paralez)

It would be very disappointing if, after implemented, fares were to be increased ↑ than 2.5% anyway.

Also, we should suggest some of the “alternatives” to be considered in the study: e.g., outsourcing the administration of the reservation and ticketing; adding another boat instead or in addition; reducing (not increasing) fares in off peak times, based on the assumption that you increase riders, thus balance the loss of revenue.

Final comment: I live 12 miles from Winslow/Bainbridge ferry – at peak morning commute it can take anywhere from 45 min to 90 min to get from my house to the ferry – so if I have a reservation where do I wait? I still arrive early, when traffic is good.

- (Anonymous)
 1. Preferential, non-reservation group sounds very favorable AKA “Priority Access Program” for someone like me who can’t always plan.
 2. It sounds like there needs to be a line/parking space for reservations and another line for non-reservation...having the two categories intermixed would not speed anything up.
 3. By using electronic scheduling the system should be able to “communicate” instantly. Currently e.g. @ *Pt. T. the “system” will not even talk w/ you within an hour before departure. If there are still spaces the phones should communicate. Are there scheduling systems that can receive phone calls, instant messaging, internet, etc. all “@ once” and be fair for someone to come first – first served.
 4. I’ve mentioned this before but I feel it is very un-economical, for patrons, to idle slowly to the tkt booth. Ideally one should drive up to a parking spot and not move again until loading. This would require staff and equipment to proceed up the parked line but stop lots of wasted time.

*I heard in evening session that Pt. T. has been successful with reservations: As I already wrote, in my experience, Pt. T. has not been successful!